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6 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
7 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
8 AT SEATTLE

9 MARIA DEL CARMEN MARTINEZ
10 PATTERSON,

11 Plaintiff,

12 v.

13 AT&T SERVICES INC., a Delaware
14 Corporation,

15 Defendant.
16

Case No. C18-1180 RSM

ORDER GRANTING PLAINTIFF'S
COUNSEL'S MOTION TO WITHDRAW
AND PARTIALLY GRANTING
REQUEST FOR STAY

17 This matter comes before the Court on Plaintiff's Counsel's Motion to Withdraw. Dkt.
18 #31. Plaintiff's counsel cites as the basis of their motion, "After consulting with Ethics Counsel
19 Leland Ripley regarding a potential conflict, Plaintiff's Counsel learned it cannot continue
20 representation under Washington's Rules of Professional Conduct, RPC 1.16(a)(1)." *Id.* at 2.
21 Plaintiff's counsel requests a stay of this action until March 12, 2020 or, in the alternative, a one-
22 year continuance of the trial date and all deadlines that have not yet passed. *Id.* Defendant's
23 untimely response does not object to withdrawal of counsel but asks that the stay be limited to
24 two months. Dkt. #32 at 5.
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27 Under this district's local rules, courts ordinarily permit an attorney to withdraw until
28 sixty days before the discovery cut-off in a civil case. Local Rules W.D. Wash. LCR 83.2(b).

ORDER GRANTING PLAINTIFF'S COUNSEL'S MOTION TO WITHDRAW AND
PARTIALLY GRANTING REQUEST FOR STAY - 1

1 Here, Plaintiff's counsel moved to withdraw more than sixty days before the discovery deadline.
2 See Dkt. #31. Accordingly, the Court GRANTS Plaintiff's Counsel's Motion to Withdraw.

3 This leaves the remaining issue of the stay. Trial is currently scheduled to begin March
4 9, 2020, with discovery closing on November 12, 2019. Dkt. #16. Plaintiff states that the
5 pending deadlines in this action have impeded her ability to secure new counsel. Dkt. #31-4 at ¶
6 6 ("The principal reason cited for declining [to represent Plaintiff] is the tight timelines imposed
7 by the case schedule as it stands."). Dkt. #31-4 at ¶ 6. For that reason, counsel argues, the Court
8 must afford Plaintiff sufficient time to secure new counsel as well as time for new counsel to
9 understand the complex legal and factual issues in this case. Dkt. #33 at 4. Plaintiff's counsel
10 contends that a two-month stay is insufficient to accomplish these tasks and that six months
11 would be more reasonable. *Id.* at 5.
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14 The Court finds that Plaintiff has failed to show good cause to stay the case until March
15 12, 2020. This action arises from a single plaintiff's claims of employment discrimination against
16 a single defendant. The legal and factual issues are therefore not sufficiently complex to warrant
17 a six-month stay. Additionally, new counsel will not be prejudiced by current case deadlines
18 given that parties will submit proposed revised deadlines once the stay is lifted. For these
19 reasons, the Court finds that a four-month stay will provide Plaintiff with sufficient time to find
20 new counsel without prejudicing Defendant through unnecessary delay.
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22 Accordingly, the Court hereby finds and ORDERS:
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- 24 1) Plaintiff's Counsel's Motion to Withdraw (Dkt. #31) is GRANTED. Ms. Charlotte
25 Sanders, Mr. Scott Blankenship, and Blankenship Law Firm, PLLC are allowed to
26 withdraw from this matter and no longer represent Plaintiff.
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- 1 2) Plaintiff's Request for Stay is GRANTED IN PART. All further proceedings are
2 stayed until January 12, 2020, including all formal discovery. All pending deadlines
3 are vacated to be reset when Plaintiff appears with new counsel or when the stay
4 expires, whichever occurs first.
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6 3) Within fifteen (15) days after the stay is lifted, counsel for parties shall meet and
7 confer regarding proposed deadlines and submit a stipulated motion of these proposed
8 deadlines to the Court for consideration.
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10 4) Plaintiff shall keep the Court informed of her current contact information, currently
11 listed as: 6735 14th Ave, NW, Seattle, WA 98117.
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13 DATED this 23rd day of October 2019.

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15 RICARDO S. MARTINEZ
16 CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
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